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Message Text

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20
ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PER-05 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01

PM-07 IGA-02 DRC-01 /044 W
---------- 109158
R 230545Z SEP 74
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECDEF WASHDC
SECSTATE WASHDC 8729
INFO HQDA WASHDC//OPD-OD

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FROM: AMBASSADOR AKINS

E.O.: 11652: N/A
TAGS: APER, MILI, SA, US
SUBJ: CONTINUITY IN SANG MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

1. I HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT PROJECT MANAGER OF THE SANG MODERNIZATION PROGRAM, COL. THOMAS A. MORT, U.S. ARMY, IS EXPECTING TO BE RETIRED ON APRIL 30, 1975. I URGE THAT HE BE AUTHORIZED TO REMAIN ON ACTIVE DUTY IN THAT CAPACITY UNTIL SUMMER OF 1976. IF HIS RETIREMENT CANNOT BE POSTPONED, THEN I WOULD ASK THAT COL. GORDON F. FERRIS, U.S. ARMY, SANG DEPUTY UNTIL LAST AUGUST, BE RETURNED TO TAKE OVER AS PROJECT MANAGER.

2. THIS REQUEST IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS:

A. THE SANG MODERNIZATION PROGRAM IS A LARGE PROJECT, WITH SCHEDULED CONTRACTS IN EXCESS OF 300 MILLION DOLLARS;

B. THE PROGRAM IS JUST GETTING UNDER WAY; IS IN A DELICATE PERIOD AND WILL BE FOR SOME MONTHS;

C. BOTH COLONEL MORT AND COLONEL FERRIS HAVE BEEN WITH THE PROGRAM SUBSTANTIALLY SINCE ITS INCEPTION, ARE EX-
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TREMELY ABLE AND ARE WELL KNOWN AND RESPECTED BY THEIR

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SAUDI COUNTERPARTS. FOR A NEW MAN TO ATTAIN THEIR KNOW-
LEDGE AND THE POSITION THEY HOLD WITH THE SAUDIS WOULD
REQUIRE A PERIOD OF PERHAPS SIX MONTHS. UNLIKE CIRCUM-
STANCES IN MORE MODERN COUNTRIES, SAUDIS DO NOT TRUST
NEW ADVISORS READILY AND A LONG PERIOD MUST BE UNDERGONE
BEFORE THEY ARE ACCEPTED AND CAN BE REALLY EFFECTIVE.
(THIS IS A MAJOR REASON FOR THE EXTENSIO OF TOURS OF
U.S. MILITARY TRAINING MISSION ADVISORS WORKING WITH THE
SAUDI ARMY FROM ONE TO TWO YEARS.) THE SANG PROGRAM WOULD
BE SERIOUSLY DISRUPTED WHILE A NEW MAN BECAME KNOWN AND
ACCEPTED.

3. I AM AWARE THAT SUCH REQUESTS REQUIRE EXCEPTIONS TO
POLICY AND MAY SHOCK ORDERLY PERSONNEL MANAGERS. BUT
TO REMOVE COLONEL MORT AND REPLACE HIM WITH AN OFFICER
NEW TO THE PROGRAM WOULD BE A SERIOUS SETBACK TO OUR
EFFORTS IN SAUDI ARABIA.
AKINS

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